

## German Government Conducts 2011 Census

by Joe Hall

The German government is currently conducting an EU-mandated two-part nation-wide census to collect both population data (*“Haushaltsbefragung”*) and information on German residential buildings (*“Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung”*). The census should be over by the end of the summer. It will reoccur every 10 years. Regardless of their citizenship/nationality, US Forces personnel, including dependents, are only obligated to comply with the residential buildings part of the census, and only if they are the **owner** of the residence. Tenants living in rented quarters need not comply.

Most of the information for the population portion of the census will be obtained from German public records. However, census takers will go to approximately 10% of the on-the-economy residences to ask supplemental personal questions.

According to § 2, paragraph 1, of the German Census Act, in connection with Article 6 and Article 7 of the Supplementary Agreement to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, all persons with SOFA status are exempted from participation in the population census (*“Haushaltsbefragung”*). If you are visited by a German census taker, you should first insist that the interviewer produce proper identification, before you show the interviewer your ID card, and then politely turn the interviewer away. If you have questions about the legitimacy of the interviewer, you can call the local census office at 0631-365-2011 for verification before providing proof of your SOFA status.

Members of the US Forces, the civilian component, and their dependents who own German housing are subject to the residential building census (*“Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung”*). The census questionnaire entitled *“Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung”* will normally come in the German mail to the on-the-economy residential address.

This form must be filled out, except for question W1 on page 3. Question W1 should be left entirely blank, unless the property is rented to a person without NATO SOFA status. If the property is rented out to a non-ID card holder, that person's information should go in block W1.

When answering question W9, mark the second alternative - *“Diplomatenwohnung/ Wohnung der ausländischen Streitkräfte”* - unless the property is rented to a non-SOFA status person. If the residence is rented out to a non-ID card holder, mark the third alternative *“keines von beiden.”*

An English translation of the *“Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung”* form can be found at: [https://www.zensus2011.de/uploads/tx\\_templavoila/Musterfragebogen\\_GWZ\\_englisch\\_02.pdf](https://www.zensus2011.de/uploads/tx_templavoila/Musterfragebogen_GWZ_englisch_02.pdf). However, only the original German form should be completed and returned. Failure to return the original German survey form can result in a heavy fine.

**Any questions on the German census should be addressed to your servicing Legal Assistance Office.**

